



Department of Conservation and Recreation
Stewardship Council Meeting
June 29, 2006
Roxbury Heritage State Park, Boston, MA

Meeting Minutes

Stewardship Councilors in Attendance: Councilors Whitney Hatch, Julian Agyeman, Henry Lee, Christina Crowley, Laura Johnson, Michael Dutton and Richard Ward.

Public Attendees: James Nelson, Friends of Myles Standish State Forest; Roger Frymire, Cambridge resident; Roger Freeman, Friends of Melnea Cass; Mike Ryan, Friends of the Fells; Heidi Ricci, Mass Audubon; and Tom Philbin, Trust for Public Land

DCR Staff in Attendance: Commissioner Stephen Burrington, Tracy Lawrence, Tricia Singer, Marianne Fleckner, Anna Prince, Tom LaRosa, Stephanie Cooper, Priscilla Geigis, Gary Briere, Thom Dugan, Sharon Hoey, Nikki Belmonte, Joe Rotondo and Jack Donahue.

I. Call To Order (1:10 p.m.), Councilor Hatch

- a. Park Supervisor Antonio Menefee welcomed the Council and gave a brief history about Roxbury Heritage State Park, commonly known as the Dillaway-Thomas House.
- b. Councilor Hatch announced he would facilitate the meeting in the absence of Chairman Cross.

II. Commissioner's Report, Commissioner Stephen Burrington

a. June Events

- i. Commissioner Burrington applauded DCR staff for an outstanding performance in June. DCR tripled its seasonal workforce, continued with the budget process, finished construction projects for the end of FY06, dealt with unprecedented levels of rainfall, and reopened pools and beaches with overwhelming success despite old equipment.
- ii. Spectacle Island opened on June 22 thanks to the dedication of DCR legal counsel Dolores Boogdonian and planner Jim Baecker. Spectacle Island raises expectations for the other Boston Harbor Islands with planned landscaping and a visitor center.
- iii. Grass and litter issues due to poor weather conditions exposed challenges in managing the urban areas and has fed into maintenance standard discussions.
- iv. Fourth of July weekend preparation has operations staff working around the clock at all parks, most notably at the Esplanade.

b. Land Protection

- i. Land protection projects in the Division of Water Supply were put on hold during much of the last year due to an requirement, not budgeted for by the MWRA, calling for MWRA to pay for indirect and fringe costs out of the Water Supply Trust on top of management costs. Operations of Water Supply were not affected, and the Governor recently signed legislation waiving the charges.
- ii. Commissioner Burrington visited the Connecticut River Greenway (from Turner Falls south to Holyoke), highlighting the land protection work accomplished to create a continuous network of recreational opportunities. Visitation needs to be encouraged through promoting these recreational areas, providing more trail signage and considering primitive camping opportunities.

III. Committee Updates and Meeting Schedules

a. Finance Committee, Whitney Hatch

- i. The Committee will meet in a couple weeks to discuss a report to be released by the Conservation and Recreation Campaign on dedicated funding options for state parks.
 - ii. The Committee will also examine the capital budget and the presentation being given today on Facility Resource Analysis.
- b. Policy Committee, *Laura Johnson, Christina Crowley and Julian Agyeman***
 - i. Councilor Crowley presented the Committee's recommendations for conduct at Stewardship Council meetings. There is no obligation for the Council to accept public comment according to the open meeting law, but the Committee agrees that it is helpful to Stewardship Council's mission. Two types of public comment have been identified: those related to agenda items and those unrelated. Comments relating to agenda items are very helpful by clarifying issues and ensuring that nothing is missed. Comments unrelated to the set agenda are helpful for awareness, but the Council will not have time to field them all. Each interest group shall choose one person to speak on their behalf on the specific topic, and more than one interest group will be allowed to speak on the topic as long as the comment addresses a different viewpoint. Comments shall not exceed 5 minutes of speaking. Additional written comments with contact information should be provided to the Council. The Chairman will review and contact the speaker if necessary for a subsequent meeting. The Council reserves the right to change this policy. The Committee will distribute their recommendations for review, and then have the new policy posted.
 - ii. Councilor Agyeman presented the Committee's recommendations on how to assist DCR in the policy review process and help DCR achieve "world class" parks system. Policies can be broken down into three categories: (1) those that the Committee will take a role in shaping, (2) those that the Committee will review before it goes to the Commissioner, and (3) those that have little direct relationship to the Stewardship Council. Criteria that will guide policy examination will be set. Examples of such criteria include whether or not a policy fits in with other DCR policies, and whether the policy meets best practices. The Committee will meet to figure out which of the 125 current policies they will put into category (1) and discuss timelines with DCR. DCR staff already sorted out internal and external policies, which will help guide the categorization process.
- c. Resource Management Plan Committee, *Henry Lee***
 - i. The Forefathers RMP was withdrawn and is being reviewed internally. This and Waquoit Bay RMP will be available before the end of the summer.
 - ii. Other projects that are underway are slow going due to lack of staff.

VI. Canton Land Taking, *Tom LaRosa, General Counsel*

- a. The Council was asked to exercise eminent domain for a friendly taking of 3.1 acres in Canton within the Ponkapoag and Fowl Meadow Area of Critical Concern for \$11,000. The property completes the DCR landscape, has scenic value and public access. *All in favor*

VII. Approval of Minutes from the May 25 Meeting – all in favor

VIII. Memorial Gifts Policy, *Sharon Hoey, Conservation Trust Director*

- a. Commissioner prefaced the presentation by stating the importance of this policy for managing the many requests from the public to memorialize worthy people or causes.
- b. The purpose of this policy is to standardize how donations are handled and provide consistency throughout the system while still allowing DCR to be good stewards to the parks. This policy addresses gifts of \$5,000 or less. Larger gifts are reviewed by the Director of External Affairs and the Office of Public Private Partnerships at EOEA.

- c. The policy outlines a step by step process that DCR staff can follow, and that members of the public can consult.

Councilor Ward inquired as to where the donations are directed. Ms. Hoey explained that a match is made by looking at the donor's budget and at the specific park's needs. General donations either go into the Conservation Trust for parks in the Division of State Parks or into the Urban Parks Trust for those in the Division of Urban Parks. Criteria exist for spending out of these trusts, such as meeting park needs and conforming to management plans.

Councilor Hatch made two suggestions for the policy. First, he noted the idea of temporary recognition, such as displaying a donor's name at a fixed location for a limited amount of time. Secondly, it was recommended that the legislative delegation be notified when DCR decides how a particular donor's gift will be used.

Councilor Lee stated that it may be wise to set up a process to protect the agency from political situations that would force memorializing outside the scope of the policy.

Councilor Agyeman stated that the Policy Committee will categorize this policy and decide on the level of approval.

IX. Facility Resource Analysis, Stephanie Cooper and Thom Dugan

- a. Ms. Cooper and Mr. Dugan gave a presentation accompanied by a handout examining the current level and optimal level of operational investment for six basic maintenance activities in a sample of DCR facilities.
- b. The facilities examined included Holyoke Range/Skinner Mountain, Myles Standish, Walden Pond, Breakheart Reservation/Camp Nihan, Revere Beach and the Southwest Corridor. Each had a park profile, comprised of information on educational programming, beaches and spray pools, acreage, campsites, buildings, trails/roads, full-time employees and seasonal staff.
- c. The methodology included developing an activity matrix, analyzing financial data, interviewing staff and gathering data, applying investment priority ratings (from a 2004 DCR project), researching maintenance standards and comparing selected standards.
- d. The activity matrix grouped tasks into landscape management, conservation management, facility management, visitor services and administration. Time allotted to each activity was measured over a 12 month period for each sample park.
- e. Each sample park was assigned the appropriate investment priority rating for which maintenance standards from the state of Oregon were applied to several key activities. Each sample park was rated as exceeds, meets, needs improvement or N/A.
- f. Outcomes
 - i. The majority of spending is directed towards staff-related costs, followed by facility management and utilities.
 - ii. Due to the limited scope of this first analysis and the diversity of sample parks, many key activities were not included. With a more complete set of activities, the ratings for each sample park may change.
 - iii. A basic methodology and framework for measuring, comparing and improving efficiency at DCR facilities was established.
- g. Next steps include developing maintenance standards specific to DCR, implementing performance management tools through FAMIS STAT, and integrating this type of analysis into ongoing efforts such as resource management planning.

Councilor Agyeman stated that it may be difficult to enforce standards across the board. Ms. Cooper remarked that the lowest common denominator between parks is being addressed. Commissioner Burrington added that in order to discuss levels of management, efficiency and monitoring, DCR needs a framework besides expectations for staff.

Councilor Johnson remarked that workforce expectations are very important to developing a rational system for discussing resources.

Councilor Lee pointed out that capital investments and depreciation need to be factored in.

Councilor Ward suggested building safety issues into the standards.

X. Other Issues

- a. The Council agreed to change the location of the July 27 meeting to Spectacle Island.
- b. The Council agreed to forego an August meeting due to summer vacations.

XI. Public Comment

- a. **Roger Frymire**, a Cambridge resident, stated that he was disappointed that the facility resource analysis did not take into account parkways or bridges. Mr. Frymire was specifically concerned with the drainage issues along Soldiers Field road causing a loss of acreage to the adjacent parkland. Mr. Frymire noted several areas of concern regarding stormwater management and stated his disappointment at the lack of visible improvements to catch basins, pavement and granite features. Commissioner Burrington asked that comments be sent directly to Rob Lowell who oversees DCR's stormwater program.
- b. **Heidi Ricci**, from Mass Audubon, handed out a news articles about citizen opposition to forestry practices to highlight the point that without any formal resource or forestry management plans in place, there is no formal place for notification of cutting or other management actions. Ms. Ricci suggested that DCR institutionalize public notification of timber practices before their scheduled occurrence and use it as an opportunity to educate constituents. Ms. Ricci stated that the Historic Parkway Guidelines review period is complete and she looks forward to a formal adoption by the Stewardship Council.
- c. **Jim Nelson**, from the Friends of Myles Standish State Forest, thanked the Council for their help in getting a quarterly meeting established between DCR and the Friends. Mr. Nelson read parts of his written statement submitted to the Council asking why DCR does not recognize their relationship as a partnership as opposed to a special event. He referred to the 2005 DCR Annual Report, citing the goals and praise for partnerships and compared listed activities to those being completed by the Friends of Myles Standish. Mr. Nelson was also concerned that his group was not invited to regional meetings of other friends groups. He requested assistance from Council on this matter and in removing the no transfer clause from cottage owners' MOU.

Meeting adjourned 3:30